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ABSTRACT

Although Delaware's educational system is in many ways rising to the challenge posed by the recent national reports on education, the Governor's Task Force on Education for Economic Growth has recommended several improvements. Appointed in July 1983, the task force held public hearings, obtained data by questionnaire, sought expert testimony, toured the state's schools, and solicited the views of educational advisory committees and councils. Over 70 recommendations were developed by the task force for presentation in this final report. Two themes dominating the report are that standards must be higher, uniform, and consistent statewide, and that local school boards must assume principal responsibility for implementing reform. Among the more significant recommendations made were that time devoted to core subjects and classroom time focused on school work both be increased, that statewide curricular standards be met, and that efforts to ensure safe, well-disciplined classrooms be stepped up. The task force's recommendations are intended to promote achievement of four goals: higher student achievement levels, a strengthened curriculum, improved performance and compensation of teachers and school personnel, and increased community involvement. The report also discusses financing these educational improvements and urges that the state board of education be charged with their implementation. (PGD)

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Agenda For Excellence

The Challenge for Delaware Education in the 1980s

EA 017 810

THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON EDUCATION
FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH
JANUARY 1984

2

STATE OF DELAWARE
GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON EDUCATION
FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

Dear Fellow Delawarean:

The Governor's Task Force on Education for Economic Growth has completed a six-month study of public education in Delaware. This report, entitled "Agenda for Excellence," contains the findings of our study and our recommendations for improving the quality of public education to meet the challenges of the 1980s.

As co-chairmen of this initiative, our goal was to develop a blueprint to ensure our children's ability to gain productive employment or to be fully prepared for advanced education upon graduation from high school. Our recommendations are aimed at providing a first-class education for all students so they may support long-term economic development and growth for our state.

We are proud of the Task Force's commitment to this effort. Task Force members have participated in nine public hearings, a Day of Testimony for national education experts, and countless working meetings. Their dedication symbolizes the commitment of the business, government, civic, and education communities to improving education in Delaware.

We have found that our state's public education system fares well when compared with those in other states. However, significant improvements are warranted as we move into the competitive marketplace of the 1980s and beyond.

Our recommendations range from substantial increases in the time students spend in academic courses and in the rigor of promotional and testing standards to the establishment of a teacher career ladder program and more cooperation between the public and private sectors.

We hope you will carefully review this report and commit yourself and your community to the implementation of our recommendations. Strong community support is essential to achieving a quality education environment. We need your help!

No issue should have a higher priority than properly educating the youth of Delaware. To this goal, we dedicate our report.

Sincerely,

Michael N. Castle Robert P. Barnett

Lieutenant Governor Michael N. Castle
Chairman

Robert P. Barnett
Co-Chairman

Our recommendations are aimed at providing a first-class education for all students so they may support long-term economic development and growth for our state.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I.	Call for Action
PART II.	Background: A Statewide Response
PART III.	Summary of the Recommendations
PART IV.	Action Plan to Improve Delaware's Schools
	Goal 1: Raise student achievement
	Goal 2: Strengthen the curriculum
	Goal 3: Improve performance and compensation of teachers and school personnel
	Goal 4: Increase community involvement
PART V.	Financing Educational Improvements
PART VI.	Implementation

PART I

Call For Action

The advantages that led historically to American prosperity and productivity are no longer available to the nation as we approach the 21st Century. Our economic success has been based in large measure on the widespread availability of cheap energy, abundant natural resources, an inexpensive work force, and an unmatched pioneering spirit and drive.

Our competitors in the world economy now have access to energy, natural resources, and a competent labor force that are in many cases equal to or less costly than our own. In addition, they have the same access to world markets because of technological advances in telecommunications and transportation.

Thus, competition for new markets will intensify. While the nation's productivity receded during the last several years, our competitors, including Japan and West Germany, have made substantial inroads into our once dominant position in the marketplace.

Education in America

Consequently, America faces the prospect of either lowering its standard of living or creating new areas of economic activity in which our products and services can compete effectively. This vital increase in American economic productivity is dependent upon our national ability to command a leadership position in a variety of technologies.

This is the underlying theme in all the recent national reports on education—particularly the National Commission on Excellence report, *Nation at Risk*, and the report of the Education Commission of the States, *Action for Excellence*. A well-educated citizenry is now more than ever our most valuable resource—perhaps the only resource that can make a significant difference in our destiny.

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Our ability to maintain a competitive advantage in the world economy, to preserve national security and international peace, as well as to fulfill the goal of equal economic opportunity for all is closely linked to our ability to provide education for all persons.

To be sure, the mission of the public schools is far greater and enduring than simply the training of a competent work force, but many of the noble goals of the public schools are jeopardized if the current weaknesses in our schools are not corrected. "Our progress as a nation," noted John F. Kennedy, "can be no swifter than our progress in education... The human mind is our fundamental resource."

Across the nation a sense of crisis about the declining quality of elementary and secondary education has emerged. Although there have been consistent reductions in the rates of illiteracy in the United States, millions of Americans are still estimated by the 1983 White House Conference on Productivity to be unable to read, communicate, compute, make judgments, or take actions based on what they have read. As a result, these individuals have fewer job opportunities and even when they are employed, they often need remedial training.

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The basic competence in science and mathematics required for lifelong employment is lacking among many new entrants to the labor force. This is in direct contrast to the increased work force skills we find among employees of our major world competitors.

The national reports claim there has been an erosion in the way pupils fulfill the standards in our schools. Curriculum options have increased dramatically and diffused instruction in core-subject areas; testing and academic standards have been reduced, and vocational programs have slighted basic academic skills.

Teachers have suffered declines in real compensation and parental and community support and have encountered a deteriorating working environment. As a result, there will be a shortage of qualified teachers by the end of the decade, and there is a critical and growing shortage of math and science teachers now.

Education in Delaware

While there are indications of problems in public education in America, there is also evidence that many of these disturbing trends are being challenged in Delaware:

- At each grade level (1-11), the scores of Delaware pupils exceed the national average, sometimes by as much as 26%, on the California Achievement Tests of Reading,

Language, and Mathematics.

- SAT scores in Delaware have increased slightly over the past two years. Delaware currently ranks third of those states in which at least half the schools' seniors take the examination.
- Delaware's average pupil/teacher ratio, a prime determinant of student learning and achievement, improved from 22.3 in 1972 to 17.8 in 1982.
- The qualifying score for Delaware National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists has consistently exceeded that for the large majority of states.
- Teacher education students at the University of Delaware have SAT scores that are 8% higher than the average college student in the country and 20% higher than the average teacher education student.
- The Teacher of the Year program recognizes exceptional teachers in each district of the state.
- Higher curriculum standards have been adopted recently by the State Board of Education and are being implemented.
- Programs for disruptive youth and programs for academically gifted students are supported by the state.
- Over the last ten years, Delaware has moved from 29th to 9th place in the number of 9th graders who complete high school.
- Jobs for Delaware Graduates, a program to ease the pupil's transition to the marketplace, has been established throughout Delaware.
- Delaware ranks third nationally in state support per pupil.

The Need for Improvement

The Task Force believes that there is still room for improvement:

- SAT scores in Delaware, while slightly above the national average, declined 5% on the verbal aptitude test and 4% on the mathematics test over the last ten years.
- Over 30% of 11th graders could not answer questions testing their literal comprehension of what they read (1983 data), nor could they answer questions that required them to recognize and choose well-organized paragraphs (1983 data). Only 16% of 13-year-olds could write acceptable

While there are indications of problems in public education in America, there is also evidence that many of these disturbing trends are being challenged in Delaware.

persuasive statements (1980 data).

- In grades 7-12, 26.3% of math teachers (19.6% in grades 9-12 and 35.8% in grades 7-8) are not certified to teach math.
- From 1971-1981 the number of math and science teachers who graduated from Delaware schools of education declined 85.7% and 71.4% respectively. Over the last five years, for example, at a time when university enrollments were increasing, only 13 students from the University of Delaware chose to become math teachers.
- The average teacher's salary in Delaware has slipped from eighth place among the states to 20th place in 1983.
- Only 38% of graduates of teacher education programs at the University of Delaware are attracted to teaching positions in Delaware.
- The state currently has no time allocation requirements for instruction in the elementary school core subjects.
- Teachers in northern New Castle County on average earn at least $3,000 per year more than their counterparts in Sussex and Kent Counties, making it difficult to attract and retain qualified teachers in those counties.
- Delaware has no incentive built into school compensation systems that rewards performance and encourages professional advancement. Opportunities for promotion are almost nonexistent for teachers who wish to stay in the classroom.

Over 30% of 11th graders could not answer questions testing their literal comprehension of what they read (1983 data), nor could they answer questions that required them to recognize and choose well-organized paragraphs (1983 data).

The consensus for change

Whether the nation's schools have, as Harold Howe, a former U.S. Commissioner of Education observed, merely a cold, the flu, or pneumonia is a matter of some disagreement in the national reports. Nevertheless, there are in all the reports a set of common themes that were contributed by the Governor's Task Force on Education for Economic Growth:

(1) The health of the nation is tied to the health of its schools.

(2) The historic commitment to universal schooling and equity must be preserved.

(3) There must be a rigorous core of subject matter that all pupils must master.

(4) Teachers, the critical link in the improvement of the schools, must be better-educated persons and be com-

pensated according to their contribution to the educational program.

(5) The critical educational reforms require a mixture of federal, state, and local effort from a focused coalition of all interested parties—teachers, parents, taxpayers, business leaders, legislators, the colleges and universities, the media, and others.

The indicators that led the authors of the National Commission on Excellence to conclude that the nation is at risk lead us to conclude that our state's public education system fares well when compared with other states. Standardized test scores, perhaps not the best measure of the health of the schools but a measure nevertheless, are not declining in Delaware. We have regulations in place for curriculum reform and competency assessments for pupils and new teachers that are commonly recommended in the national reports.

However, while Delaware public schools are good in comparison with those in other states, improvements are needed. The problems of the schools are complex; the solutions are neither simple nor obvious to even the best thinkers. As H. L. Mencken noted, "To every complex problem there is a simple solution, and it is almost always wrong."

The Governor's Task Force on Education for Economic Growth has identified several areas of public education in Delaware that could be improved substantially through the adoption of the recommendations that follow. Some of these problems are longstanding, and the solutions we recommend have been cited over the years by educational leaders in Delaware; others have been brought to light only recently. While there may be some criticism of specific recommendations contained in this report, we believe all Delawareans agree that it is time to reaffirm our commitment to excellence in education.

Critical educational reforms require a mixture of federal, state, and local effort from a focused coalition of all interested parties—teachers, parents, taxpayers, business leaders, legislators, the colleges and universities, the media, and others.

PART II

Background: A Statewide Response

During the fall of 1983, nine public hearings were held throughout Delaware. More than 1,000 people attended these hearings and over 200 individuals testified and gave their opinions on the condition of education in Delaware and their suggestions for its improvement.

The recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Education for Economic Growth are a product of months of study, debate, and public scrutiny of Delaware's educational system. From the time that the Task Force was appointed on July 26, 1983, by Governor du Pont through Executive Order 130, it has sponsored and participated in numerous activities in its study of Delaware public schools. The Task Force began by reviewing the reports and studies of education conducted at the national and local levels, such as *A Nation At Risk*, and numerous studies conducted by the State Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

The Task Force focused on the question of how education in Delaware could better foster economic growth and development. To put this question in proper perspective, the Task Force sponsored "A Day of National Testimony on Education" in Legislative Hall. Eighteen nationally recognized business and education leaders addressed the Task Force at this event.

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Because public education affects the entire community, the Task Force also mailed a questionnaire to over 90,000 Delaware families to ensure that maximum public participation would be provided. This was the largest survey on education ever conducted in Delaware. More than 3,500 families responded.

The Task Force was organized into five subcommittees to examine various education issues. The subcommittees were Teacher Policy; Curriculum; Standards and Expectations; Public-Private Relations; and Leadership and Fiscal Support. Each subcommittee conducted meetings and sought expert testimony from

well over 100 leaders of the business, civic, and education communities. Overall, close to 100 formal subcommittee meetings were held, in addition to countless working meetings.

There were other opportunities for public participation in the Task Force's work. Task Force members toured the schools to understand them better. Forums were assembled in which the views of particular constituencies were presented. The Task Force took great care to coordinate its work with that of other education initiatives under way in Delaware, such as the Greater Wilmington Development Council's school project. Furthermore, the views of approximately 100 education advisory committees and councils at the state and local levels were solicited to broaden the Task Force's perspective.

Representatives of every major Delaware educational community served on the Task Force. School board members, administrators, principals, teachers, students, business leaders from both large and small corporations, high technology and manufacturing industries, and urban and rural areas were represented. Leaders of civic, community, and parent groups were participants as well. In addition, several state legislators and other state government officials were members of the Task Force.

The Task Force recommendations can be implemented. Local boards, the State School Board, the legislature, and the Governor must step forward and assume responsibility for moving the report from a series of suggestions to a series of actions. The Task Force recognizes that some of these issues are new, although most have been debated before. All need reinforcement even though some have already been addressed by a number of local school boards or by the State Board of Education.

Task Force members toured the schools to understand them better. Forums were assembled in which the views of particular constituencies were presented.

PART III

Summary of the Recommendations

Two themes dominate this report:

- Standards must be higher, uniform, and consiste statewide.
- Local school boards must assume principal responsibility f implementing educational reform.

These potentially conflicting themes underscore the need f full cooperation and communication between state and local offici in carrying out the recommendations.

Educational reform also requires the active involvement of bu ness, labor, community-based organizations, the media, churche and others. All of these parties must focus their respective roles a obligations on the improvement of education in Delaware.

The issues the Task Force addressed are substantive a far-reaching. The overriding objective of the report is to identi actions that will enhance student achievement. This focus natura led the Task Force to consider ways to improve the performan of teachers and other school personnel, strengthen the curric lum, increase community involvement, and establish plans f future action.

Over 70 major recommendations covering a variety of educational issues are offered by the Task Force.

The recommendations are costly to both local school distric and the state. They will require the infusion of over $50 milli during the next few years, through both one-time and recurri annual appropriations. These additions can be made through : di ing financial mechanisms or through new ones and monitor through an appropriate statewide body to ensure accountability.

Over 70 major recommendations covering a variety of educ tional issues are offered by the Task Force. Among the mo significant are the following:

- a 25% increase in the time devoted to core subjects

- more classroom time devoted to school work
- compliance with minimum statewide curricular standards
- stepped-up efforts to ensure safe and well disciplined classrooms

A great deal of emphasis was placed on the importance of omework. The Task Force further recommends that minimum omework standards be adopted by local school boards and that eacher and parental involvement be increased in this area.

The Task Force concludes that the causes of failure in schools nust be identified early and corrected. The Task Force calls or significant reductions in the size of classes in grades 1-3 and he establishment of mandatory kindergarten. Consistent with edu- ational research evidence, the Task Force concludes that the est way to reduce learning problems is to attack them in a pre- entive way before they develop or identify them early enough to emedy them.

The Task Force also calls for additional resources to ensure hat students can pass higher standards and examinations recom- nended by the committee for student promotion from one grade o the next.

The Task Force recommends the development of a career adder compensation plan to help attract and hold the highest quality eachers in Delaware schools. The elements of a career ladder plan vould be developed with the assistance of a professional consulting rm in consultation with teachers, university faculty, school board nembers, and school administrators.

Although the Task Force views the development of a career adder plan as a necessary and long-term step toward appropriate evels of teacher compensation, the committee also believes that urrent teacher salaries are inadequate to attract and retain qual- y teachers.

To provide flexibility for local school boards to finance new rograms and to establish new incentives for better management of unds, the Task Force recommends that districts be authorized to pend up to 5% of their appropriated state funds for purposes other han those specifically designated by existing state formulas. Finally, he Task Force recommends, as a first step, that state and local ommunities increase salaries in districts where salary levels fall elow those in northern New Castle County.

Without broad-based community support, schools cannot sur- ive and flourish. In recognition of this fact, the Task Force points

The Task Force recommends the development of a career ladder compensation plan to help attract and hold the highest quality teachers in Delaware schools.

out that both the school and the community at large should equally benefit from enhanced levels of community participation. The Task Force also recommends the establishment of outreach programs for senior citizens and retirees, life-long learning centers, child care centers, recreational centers, and career exploration centers in the schools. Increased business involvement in school activities is encouraged to bolster community interest in and support for public education.

The Task Force attempted to deal with a variety of complex educational issues over a relatively brief period of time. Since other issues need further study, including the needs of students in special education and bilingual programs, the Task Force concludes that the State Board of Education should report periodically to the Governor and the General Assembly on the progress of implementing the recommendations. Moreover, they should study and review these other matters that, given the Task Force's charge, could not be addressed in this report.

Increased business involvement in school activities is encouraged to bolster community interest in and support for public education.

PART IV

Action Plan to Improve Delaware's Schools

GOAL 1: RAISE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Competency Standards and Student Performance Evaluation

1. **Competency exams.** The State School Board should require that students in grades 1-11 pass competency (mastery) examinations prior to their promotion from one grade level to the next. Prior to their receipt of a diploma, students should pass a graduation examination. The objective of this examination is to raise the standards for student performance and reduce the inconsistency in standards that exists across the state. DPI will be required to establish statewide standardized tests covering all required subjects. These tests will:
   - assess mastery in the basic and higher level skills for grade-level advancement;
   - assess whether students are capable of applying these skills to real-life situations; and
   - place students in classes designed to optimize their academic skills.
2. **Grade-level promotion.** The State Board should establish standards for grade-level promotion so that students leaving the 12th grade will be capable of either advanced study or entering the job market. The objective is to make the student and parent aware of the career and advanced education opportunities that will result from the student's performance and course selections.

   Therefore, local school districts should establish effective counseling systems for grades 7-9. Counselors should be responsible for managing this system and giving the student and

The State Board should establish standards for grade-level promotion so that students leaving the 12th grade will be capable of either advanced study or entering the job market.

parent enough information to make informed decisions on course selection and career objectives.

This will build upon a core curriculum as recommended in this report and the identification of courses needed for career and advanced education opportunities, and will provide windows of opportunity for students to change their field of study.

3. **Student evaluation.** Local school boards should supplement the statewide annual competency examinations with a student performance evaluation system that identifies and responds to strengths and weaknesses in all curricular areas of the academic program:
   a. Teachers should assess student performance several times in each marking period. Nationally standardized tests of achievement (e.g., California Achievement Tests) should be given at the end of the year to evaluate student progress and overall achievement in comparison to national norms.
   b. Teachers should provide all students with a written assessment of their performance at appropriate intervals. Each assessment should be signed and returned to the teacher by the parent/guardian. Students who receive a failing grade or drop significantly from previous achievement levels in any of the four marking periods should be required to discuss and agree upon a remedial action plan.
   c. Local school boards should encourage principals and teachers to develop remediation activities for students who achieve below the competency standards. These activities will be needed to assist some students in meeting the higher standards recommended in this report. These activities will occur in the regular classroom.

      Local school boards should enhance their current remedial education programs for students who require more intensive remedial instruction. Students who fail to pass competency examinations will be required to enroll in special district programs.
   d. Local school boards should develop and test methods of monitoring student academic development and achievement in all grades and courses to assure that what has been learned in the classroom can be applied in the work environment and life. This evaluation should be

Local school boards should develop and test methods of monitoring student academic development and achievement in all grades and courses to assure that what has been learned in the classroom can be applied in the work environment and life.

conducted by someone other than the classroom teacher but who works closely with teachers of those students whom they are monitoring.

It is recognized that the job evaluation study that will be conducted under the career ladder program will clarify these roles and responsibilities. This special monitoring is a long-term strategy to minimize the need for remedial education and enhance opportunity for students to achieve at higher levels.

e. Teachers should use tests that require essay responses, particularly in subjects like English and social studies that concentrate on writing and language skills.

4. **Curricula for advanced students.** Local school boards should provide courses that challenge the abilities of students. Students should be encouraged to take the Advance Placement Examination and achieve advanced placement at a college or university.
5. **Gifted programs.** The State Board should expand programs that encourage academic excellence, such as the Summer Gifted and Talented Program, the University of Delaware's Advanced Studies Program, and FAME.
6. **DPI school evaluation.** The school evaluation and monitoring system presently administered by the Department of Public Instruction should be maintained and reinforced to assure that the above standards are met. It is recommended that local school boards receive the results of the evaluation and monitoring in a public meeting.

Class Size/Unit Count

1. **Smaller classes.** The State School Board should recommend to the legislature that class sizes in all grades be reduced. The Task Force specifically recommends first that grades 1-3 be reduced to an average actual class size of 16 per class. The Task Force recommends that a funding mechanism similar to the Worthen formula be used.
2. **Funding for substitute teachers.** The State School Board should study alternative methods for funding substitute teachers fully by the state. Currently local districts share in the expense of these state mandated services.
3. **Fractional administrative units.** The State School Board should recommend to the legislature that school districts be funded for fractional administrative units. This would entitle local

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districts to that portion of funds normally lost due to the cutof point of the funding formula and would provide school principals with additional administrative resources.

4. **Unit justification.** The State School Board should recommend to the legislature alternative procedures for the timing for the unit justification. The unit justification determines the amount of state funding given to each local district. An earlier justification is needed for better planning and staff allocation.
5. **Teaching methods.** The Department of Public Instruction, in cooperation with institutions of higher education, will encourage teachers to master and use different teaching styles, such as lecturing to transmit information, coaching to teach skills, and Socratic questioning to increase the students' understanding. It is understood that class size would also need to vary if these alternative teaching styles are to be effective.

Homework Requirements

1. **Minimum standards.** Local school boards should require that minimum standards for homework assignments in each subject in grades 1-12 be put in writing and sent to parents and students for their acknowledgement. Time allotments per course should be stated. It is expected that homework levels will be higher than what currently exists.

   Teachers should be encouraged to assign meaningful homework that is related to coursework. Homework should be a part of the regular academic program of the school and is necessary because mastery of the curriculum requires pupils to study and practice outside the classroom.

The State School Board should require that kindergarten be compulsory for all children reaching five years of age by December 31 of the school year.

2. **Evaluation.** Local school boards should require that homework assignments be evaluated, returned to the student, and become a part of each student's final grade.
3. **Writing skills.** Local school boards should require that homework requiring essay responses be emphasized by teachers.

Academic Time

1. **Time management.** Local school boards should design and implement strategies to assure that students spend more time on school tasks. There should be more efficient management of the school day. Principals should insure that classroom interruptions are minimized. Teachers are encouraged to utilize the full class period for school work.
2. **Compulsory kindergarten.** The State School Board should

require that kindergarten be compulsory for all children reaching five years of age by December 31 of the school year.

3. **Required courses.** The State School Board should adopt as an objective that in grades 1-12 at least 850 hours of the school year be allotted to core academic courses (English, mathematics, science, social studies, and computer science/foreign languages). Further, the State Board should develop an action plan, in concert with local school districts, to achieve this objective.

   The core curriculum for the Vo-Tech shared-time students should be re-examined to achieve this objective beginning in tenth grade. Up to 350 hours of the total 850 hours may come from Vo-Tech courses.

   To reach the 850 hour objective, local districts will have to lengthen the school day and/or the school year and/or reduce the number of non-core courses.
4. **Attendance.** Local school boards and the state should require that attendance policies be developed and firmly administered to reduce student absenteeism and tardiness.
5. **Special Education.** The State Board should require that special education students be provided educational programs to ensure them the opportunity to become productive employees as well as productive citizens.

Discipline

1. **Code of conduct.** Local school boards should ensure that a fair, clearly stated, and widely understood code of conduct be cooperatively developed by parents, students, teachers, and administrators. This code will be sent to parents and posted in conspicuous locations in all schools. Repeated violations of the code should lead to a student's removal from the classroom. The objective of this recommendation is to have the exemplary discipline practices of some school districts adopted on a uniform level statewide.
2. **Disruptive students.** Local school boards should ensure that special programs for disruptive students be established where none exist and that existing services be enhanced.
3. **Implementation.** Local school boards should ensure that school principals be given full authority and responsibility for the implementation and adherence to school codes of conduct.
4. **Schoolwide application.** Principals should ensure that classroom disciplinary standards be applied throughout the school, including study halls.

The State School Board should adopt as an objective that in grades 1-12 at least 850 hours of the school year be allotted to core academic courses (English, mathematics, science, social studies, and computer science/foreign languages).

Classroom Organization and Support

1. **Instructional materials.** Local school boards should establish a policy to ensure that text books, laboratory equipment, and other instructional materials, including computers, where appropriate, be made available as required and updated regularly. Local school districts should implement and the State Board should monitor this policy.

   Sufficient numbers of text books should be made available to students as required for course study and homework requirements. Specifically, text books should not be out-of-date. It is also recommended that school library collections be enhanced. This may require a combination of public and private resources. On-going review is recommended, but no more than five years should lapse before a review of the availability and appropriateness of these materials is conducted.
2. **Study methods.** Principals should ensure that instruction in "how to study" be provided to all grades.

It is the belief of the Task Force that careful implementation of these recommendations will raise student achievement in Delaware.

GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN THE CURRICULUM

1. **Course guidelines.** The State Department of Public Instruction, in cooperation with teachers and school officials, should develop course guidelines that adhere to state standards.
   a. The State Board should establish a timetable for full implementation of the recommendations contained in the "Re-examination of the Curriculum and High School Graduation Requirements" (Aiken/Broyles report—this report recommended that the high school graduation requirements include one additional mathematics and science course.)
   b. The State Board should mandate appropriate time allocations for middle school academic subjects including mathematics, science, English language arts, and social studies. Appropriate time allocations should also be given to the related arts, physical education, computer application, and foreign language.

      This will necessitate that the DPI evaluate the middle

The State Department of Public Instruction, in cooperation with teachers and school officials, should develop course guidelines that adhere to state standards.

school curriculum program and develop a core course curriculum similar to that established at the high school level by the Aiken/Broyles report. This will strengthen the role of the middle school in meeting the pre-adolescent transition from elementary to high school.

c. The State Board should mandate appropriate time allocations for all subjects at the elementary school level. This will necessitate that the DPI establish time allocations for all elementary level courses. This will reduce the inconsistency of time currently devoted to essential elementary subjects across the state.

2. **Vocational programs.** The State Board should encourage vocational and regular educators to work cooperatively toward adjusting student schedules so that all students have access to vocational programs. Extra consideration should be given to special education students to assure them access to vocational offerings. A periodic review by public and private sector representatives should be undertaken to evaluate whether vocational training programs continue to meet market needs.
3. **Computers.** The State Board should ensure that an appropriate plan for the utilization of technology in both instructional and administrative computing be developed. The state plan should achieve a coordination of computer-related activities among all school districts.
4. **Community service.** School districts should encourage students to participate in community service projects.

The State Board should ensure that an appropriate plan for the utilization of technology in both instructional and administrative computing be developed. The state plan should achieve a coordination of computer-related activities among all school districts.

GOAL 3: IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE AND COMPENSATION OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Career Development Program

The Task Force recommends the development of a career ladder because it recognizes that any improvement in student performance depends largely upon the quality of the teacher's instruction. Therefore, the Task Force believes it is critical to attract, motivate, and reward quality teachers.

The development of a career ladder is recommended as the means to accomplish this end. A career ladder differentiates job

responsibilities within an organization and provides employees wi career advancement opportunities based on professional develo ment and performance.

The Task Force recommends that an outside professio organization assist in the development of the program reco mended below. The Governor should appoint a steering committe composed of appropriate members of the education and busine communities and legislators, to select and work with the outsi professional organization and monitor this study.

The study would be conducted during FY 85; implementati of the recommendations would start in FY 86. A phased, multi-ye implementation schedule will be necessary.

Although the study may show that implementing all of the elements would be impossible or undesirable, it is necessary th each of the following be examined:

1. **Structure.** A teacher career ladder structure should e phasize professional development from beginning teacher master teacher with up to three levels in between.
2. **Career ladder alternative.** The career ladder program mandatory for new teachers, but could be elected by existi teachers if they wanted to participate in the expanded care and pay opportunities. Those not electing to participate in su a program would remain under the structure currently in plac
3. **Job description.** A job description should be written for ea position in the school system, and a model organizatio structure should be developed.
4. **Duties.** Instructional and non-instructional duties of teache should be defined clearly to eliminate as many non-instructio duties as possible. It is recommended that the combined u of trained paraprofessionals, aides, and volunteers be used dministering these non-instructional activities.
5. **Performance review.** A performance review system shou be developed in concert with teachers, administrators, and t local school board.

   A formal performance review should be conducted at lea annually by the local school administration. This evaluatio performed by a variety of evaluators, should be an on-goi process during the year. The review should be given to t teacher and a copy kept in the personnel file.

   This evaluation should be based on student performanc instructional techniques, classroom management, pare

A teacher career ladder structure should emphasize professional development from beginning teacher to master teacher with up to three levels in between.

teacher relationships, cooperativeness, and professional development. The form and process of the performance review should be formalized. Evaluation must be regular, consistent, and fair and applied to all teachers both in and out of the career ladder system.

6. **Salary.** A salary administration program should be established only after job descriptions for teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals have been established. The administration of the salary schedule should be flexible. This salary administration schedule should be based on the person's performance, job responsibilities, years of service, education, and other factors to be determined jointly by teachers and administrators.

7. **Administrators.** A performance evaluation and salary administration program should be developed for administrators after job descriptions have been established.

8. **School management.** The school management system needs to be reexamined. The building principal must be the school instructional leader. Routine administrative tasks currently performed by principals must be eliminated as much as possible for this to occur.

   Therefore, it is recommended that each school have a building administrator or other appropriate staff, working under the principal to assist in the daily operation of the facility and with discipline. It is recognized that it may not be necessary to have additional staff in every school building but rather to share support staff among buildings and possibly throughout the district.

9. **Department heads.** An entry-level management position or department head (beyond the master teacher) should be established. This individual will coordinate a particular discipline or grade-level sequence and will have responsibility for assisting in instruction and program evaluation, curriculum development, curriculum supervision and coordination, and teacher evaluation.

10. **Teacher recruitment.** With the coming teacher shortage, districts must be prepared to start recruiting superior students at the college level.

11. **Bonuses.** Bonuses for outstanding performance or service should be available. This also necessitates a fair evaluation system.

A job description should be written for each position in the school system, and a model organizational structure should be developed.

12. **Student counseling.** Job descriptions and appropriat counselor/student ratios should be established for guidanc counseling services for all grade levels. Counseling service are important components of the education process. Pilo elementary guidance counseling services should be evaluated so that both preventive and curative measures can be taken Guidance services at the high school level should be supporte and strengthened as necessary.

13. **Longer teacher year.** The teacher year should b lengthened to 190 days from the current 185 days on a rotatio basis for 20% of the teachers each year, so that during an five-year period all staff will have benefited from five additiona days of professional development activities and curriculum development. This would effectively lengthen the school yea from a cost point of view by one day from the current 185 days All master teachers would be paid to work 200 days each year.

14. **Longer teacher day.** The teacher day should be expande to eight hours per day to allow for more professional develop ment and work with students.

The Task Force has reviewed teacher salary levels in Dela ware and concludes that these salaries must be improved. Th study described above will generate the framework for dealing wit this matter. The Task Force recognizes that the Governor an legislature will be considering some salary adjustment for all schoo employees during the FY 85 budget process. The Task Forc believes that a salary adjustment such as this is appropriate i recognition of our findings and should be incorporated as the firs phase of the total career ladder salary administration program.

The State School Board should be permitted to authorize school districts to use up to 5% of their appropriated state funds for purposes other than those specifically contemplated by the formula used to determine the amount of the appropriation.

Leadership, Fiscal Support and Administration

1. **Increased flexibility in use of state appropriations.** The State School Board should be permitted to authorize school districts to use up to 5% of their appropriated state funds for purposes other than those specifically contemplated by the formula used to determine the amount of the appropriation. School districts would be required to submit to DPI a written explanation/justification. DPI could disapprove such planned use of funds in a given case, but only upon determination that the use would be substantially detrimental to the state's overall educational program.
2. **Competitive teacher salaries statewide.** New state funding should be provided to local school districts to pay all teachers

salaries that are competitive with those in northern New Castle County. This should be a state incentive funding program that would require all local districts to raise property taxes to a level corresponding to that of New Castle County. State funding would not be provided under this plan unless the district provides its proportionate share toward increasing its local salaries through increases in its property taxes.

Increases in property taxes to the extent required to implement this program could continue to require approval via referendum, or school boards could be given the authority to initiate such tax increases. This program should be phased in over a period of years. The Task Force recognizes that the career ladder study does not preclude the state from addressing this funding issue prior to the completion of the career ladder study.

Other methods of raising teachers' salaries to the levels in New Castle County could be considered. Typically, these methods call for state schedules for total salaries of public school employees, mandated uniform property taxes for all school districts, a statewide school property tax, or a mandated uniform level of funding for all school districts with a specified percentage of the funding to be provided locally.

The State School Board should establish a group to analyze the possibilities of state or county school property taxation methods.

3. **Local accounting format.** The State School Board should require local school districts to use uniform accounting and reporting formats to improve statewide fiscal analysis.

Training and Certification

1. **Qualifying exams for teacher training programs.** Universities and colleges should require students entering teacher training programs to pass rigorous written tests in their discipline major as well as competency tests in reading, math and communication skills.
2. **Clinical training.** Universities and colleges should increase the amount of time students in teacher education programs spend in clinical settings like tutoring, classroom observations, and student teaching. These increases should begin in the sophomore year.
3. **Special certification requirements.** The State School Board should establish specific certification requirements for other educational specialists, such as computer education teachers, educational diagnosticians, and teachers of disruptive students.

New state funding should be provided to local school districts to pay all teachers salaries that are competitive with those in northern New Castle County.

4. **Certification requirements for new teachers.** The State School Board should require that new teachers be certified for the specific area to which they are assigned. The certification requirements for middle school teachers should be reviewed and strengthened.
5. **Pre-employment skills test.** The State School Board should ensure that the results of a pre-professional skills test be known before a teacher is hired.
6. **Professional development.** The State School Board should support and expand the concept of the Teacher Center and the program of personalized professional development. More time should be spent on professional development with increased emphasis on classroom management and improved teaching techniques.
7. **Continuing education of teachers.** The State School Board should require all new teachers, as well as those participating in the career ladder program, to take additional higher education courses for continued certification and professional status. Courses to be taken and credits required should be agreed upon between the teacher and the teacher's supervisor, supervising principal, and/or department head in each school. The superintendent of schools should set minimum overall requirements for continuing education of teachers.

   The professional staff should participate actively in professional associations, and whenever possible give presentations at workshops and conferences. Such involvement will provide the participants with the valuable exchange of ideas and keep them current on changes that are taking place in the profession.

   Local districts should count any graduate course, professional development program or seminar approved by the district whether paid for by the individual or the district, for professional growth within the profession.
8. **Reimbursement for continuing education.** The State School Board, in cooperation with local districts, should ensure that teachers are reimbursed for courses they have completed successfully at the graduate level provided they are related to their educational job description and are pre-approved by the school district.

The State School Board should require that new teachers be certified for the specific area to which they are assigned.

GOAL 4:
INCREASE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community Participation

1. **Local advisory committees.** Local school boards should establish community advisory committees with expertise drawn from appropriate businesses and other resource organizations to assist school officials in areas such as transportation, energy, finances, and public relations.
2. **Goal setting.** Local school boards should encourage community leaders to participate with DPI, administrators, teachers, and other appropriate school officials in setting goals for individual schools and evaluating them.
3. **Community use of school facilities.** Local school boards and local school officials should work towards developing schools as life-long learning centers available to the community after and, where feasible, during the school day. The school should be re-established as the focal point of the community.

   These additional services should be funded entirely with private resources and not with instructional funds. Services include recreation centers, community meeting sites, and child-care centers. It is recommended that adult education programs be strengthened to help achieve this objective and assist in funding these requisite services.
4. **Outreach to senior citizens.** Local school boards and local schools should develop outreach programs for retirees and senior citizens that provide for both participation in and support for local school activities.
5. **Planning.** Local school boards should require local school administrators to advise superintendents of plans for the involvement of groups such as parents, police, courts, social service agencies, substance abuse organizations, and other community agencies in their schools. Such plans could include involvement in tutoring, study hall monitoring, computer literacy, study skills, discipline, and substance abuse.

Parent Participation

1. **Parent advisory groups.** Local schools should establish parent advisory groups composed of both parents and members of the local community served by the school. The committee should have a meaningful role in planning and monitoring school policy and curriculum.

Local school boards and local school officials should work towards developing schools as life-long learning centers available to the community after and, where feasible, during the school day.

2. **School policies and activities.** Local schools should keep parents informed of school policies and activities, such as student expectations at every grade level, written student performance assessments, conduct codes, homework requirements, course study outlines, and parent visitations of school.
3. **Course requirements.** Principals should require teachers to present course outlines to parents and students at the beginning of each marking period. These should contain established homework policies for each course.

Private Partnerships

1. **Public-private relations committees.** Local school officials should establish a district-level public-private relations committee to monitor business-education partnerships and develop new alliances.
2. **Clearinghouse of public-private initiatives.** The DPI should develop a central research network to serve as a clearinghouse for public-private initiatives.
3. **Career exploration centers.** Local school boards should establish career exploration centers at every high school to provide students a greater awareness of career opportunities; parents and the community an opportunity to share work experiences and needs; and school staff information concerning changing skill needs.
4. **Special partnerships.** Local school boards should encourage and develop public-private alliances to support Adopt-A-Program and, where feasible, Adopt-A-School partnerships.

Local school officials should establish a district-level public-private relations committee to monitor business-education partnerships and develop new alliances.

5. **Exchange programs.** Local school boards should establish teacher-business exchange programs. Such exchanges would enhance the professional development of teachers, improve curriculum, and facilitate business impact on students as potential employees and the school system in general. A sabbatical leave is recommended as a means of providing for such exchanges. It is also recommended that private resources be used to fund this program.
6. **Business support for administrative development.** The State School Board should support and expand programs such as the "Regional Academy" program now being instituted by the Greater Wilmington Development Council. This is a three-year experimental program funded principally by the business community to provide a framework for initiatives by school board members and administrative personnel of school districts, in-

cluding principals, to improve understanding of their specific job responsibilities and enhance their capabilities to perform the job functions.

The experimental program, which will focus on administrative development, instructional development, and public information, currently is limited to the northern New Castle County school districts, but should be expanded as appropriate to a statewide basis.

Public Awareness

1. **Local media coverage.** Local school board officials should meet with appropriate editorial boards of local print media to encourage a weekly feature page on educational news.
2. **Local speakers bureaus.** Local school boards should establish a local speakers bureau through which school personnel and parent leaders can address community groups.
3. **Local public relations groups.** Local school boards should assemble a local public relations group with expertise in providing in-service programs to district and school personnel and guidelines for writing news releases, and in fostering improved working relations with the media. School and district newsletters which communicate information on school activities not generally published in general circulation media should be considered as a public relations mechanism.

Local school boards should establish career exploration centers at every high school to provide students a greater awareness of career opportunities.

PART V

Financing Educational Improvement

Delawareans spend the equivalent of 27% of their per capita income on education, the sixth highest percentage in the country. We are acutely aware that some of the recommendations we have made in this report will add to that burden by requiring both large sums of additional money for the schools and some innovation in the way Delaware finances its public schools.

In 1982-83, Delawareans spent over $320 million on their schools. An estimated $50 million more will be needed over the next few years to achieve the improvements the Task Force seeks in the 19 Delaware school systems.

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State financing of public education

Educational finance has evolved over the last 150 years from a time during which the costs of education were borne by parents and the church to a public finance system that began with state lotteries and the sale of public lands and ended with the pattern most states, including Delaware, now follow. In Delaware, the state funds 67% of the cost of public education, while the local communities fund 23% of the cost through taxes on local property (the federal government funds the remaining 10% of the cost).

In only a handful of states is the percentage of the state's contribution greater than it is in Delaware, although in Delaware there is considerable variation in the level of local support among the districts (e.g., 25% in New Castle County, 12% in Kent County, and 19% in Sussex County). The variation in what the districts spend on each student varies from a low in the Caesar Rodney School District of $1,926 to a high of $4,123 in the Red Clay Consolidated School District, with costs for students in special programs as high as $26,000 per child (e.g., the state's program for autistic children in the Christina School District).

In addition to the need to raise needed revenues for the schools, financial systems in both Delaware and the other states must be responsive to: (1) an increased federal role in educational finance and regulation, (2) constitutional considerations of equity that mandate equalization of the resources available to each student, and (3) retrenchment stemming from enrollment declines, excessive inflation rates, and attempts to limit tax and expenditure levels by statute.

All this is to say that Delaware like all states will need to evaluate constantly the manner in which it captures and allocates the funds that are needed to operate and improve the schools. We see several potential areas for new revenue that merit further study —from the reallocation of existing funds, increases in existing tax rates, growth in revenues from a revitalized state economy, to the imposition of new forms of taxes and the establishment of endowment funds to enrich the schools.

The predicted costs

Making teacher salaries throughout the state competitive with those in northern New Castle County could cost the state as much as $8 million. A state incentive fund to support this effort could cost approximately the same amount. Such a program would have to be phased in over a period of years, in coordination with the implementation of the results from the proposed study of the career ladder program. The Task Force recognizes that such coordination with the career ladder study does not preclude the state from taking initial steps towards addressing this competitive pay issue and inadequate teacher salaries prior to the completion of the career ladder study.

Other methods of raising revenues should also be considered: for example, state schedules for total salaries of public school employees, mandated uniform property taxes for all school districts, a statewide school property tax, and a mandated uniform level of funding for all districts with a specified percentage of the funding provided locally.

The Task Force recommendations fall generally under three categories: (1) those having significant fiscal impact, (2) those having little or no significant fiscal impact, and (3) those requiring further study and analysis. Most of the recommendations that have fiscal impact are enhancements of current programs and allocations. A few are new initiatives, such as the establishment of the competitive pay program described above and the career ladder concept.

All this is to say that Delaware like all states will need to evaluate constantly the manner in which it captures and allocates the funds that are needed to operate and improve the schools.

The fiscal impacts of some specific recommendations can be defined more clearly. Recommendations designed to raise student achievement would increase current allocation levels in the following ways:

- $250,000 for competency exams for student promotion;
- $2.1 million ($1.6 in state, $500,000 in local) for increasing remediation activities for students who fall short of expected performance levels;
- $8.6 million ($6.32 in state, $2.3 in local) for reducing class size to an average of 16 per class for grades 1-3;
- approximately $1.5 million for funding additional administrative units; and
- $1.1 million for establishing mandatory kindergarten.

The costs of most of the curriculum reform recommendations were difficult to assess. However, one of the most significant recommendations, the coordination of computer-related activities in school districts, would cost approximately $600,000. The career ladder study would cost $300,000. The future costs of implementing a career ladder program are difficult to assess, but are assumed to be costly. At least $300,000 per year will be needed to reimburse teachers for courses they will be required to take.

A number of the recommendations, however, have little or no significant additional costs, and it was the view of the Task Force that those should be pursued vigorously by local school boards. Among the most significant include raising homework requirements, developing clear and precise attendance and disciplinary standards, imposing stricter curriculum standards, requiring more core academic time during the school day, as well as a range of private industry and community support "partnership" activities.

Education reform is costly, but the alternative is costlier. As Thomas Jefferson observed at the birth of our nation, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."

"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."
—Thomas Jefferson

PART VI

Implementation

The Office of the Governor shall charge the State Board of Education with monitoring, evaluating, and reporting to the Governor and the General Assembly on a regularly scheduled basis the progress of implementing the recommendations of the Task Force.

THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

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